

Trans-Alaska Pipeline

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member is interested in the details of this matter or not. It is very serious for British Columbia.

Mr. Comeau: Don't get so upset.

An hon. Member: Facts upset the hon. member.

Mr. Anderson: The statements made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs were, in my opinion, excellent because he did not, so to speak, waste his ammunition before the enemy was in sight. He waited until such time as Mr. Morton made a statement that he wished to have such a study undertaken and then immediately volunteered our co-operation. This was accepted and now there is the possibility of a binational study of this matter. I might say, however, that as a result of concern expressed in this House our Special Committee on Environmental Pollution decided, prior to the statement we heard today from Mr. Sharp's parliamentary secretary, to go to the coast and hear evidence from various people and experts on this question.

In other words, what the committee of this House wishes to do is to obtain evidence which, unfortunately, some of us in the west think we have but which we may not be right about. In other words, while I feel, as I have stated, that there is a *prima facie* case in this area and that I know a fair amount about this subject, I think it is most important for this House to accept the proposal of the Special Committee on Environmental Pollution and allow it to carry out its own study and to give an opportunity for all interested parties to be heard on the issue. We need more evidence; more facts.

The second aspect of this motion deals with the proposed pipeline which is to run from Alaska, up the Mackenzie Valley into southern Canada and down to the southern 48 states. I was delighted to hear it confirmed that a great deal of study has been done in this area. I believe that the people carrying out this job are doing a good job. I have confidence in them and in their ability to do the job. What I am not confident about is whether the organization of this material, from an ecological point of view, is adequate. I trust that we shall get further information from government spokesmen on this point.

In particular, I should like to know exactly what will be the composition of this committee which is to examine the ecological problems of the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. How, in other words, is this study to be carried out? We do not have that information now. Although statements have been made about what is being done, we have not heard enough on how it is being co-ordinated. As I say, I trust that further information will be forthcoming from the government on this point. The government should make a clear response so that we may understand clearly how this information is to be evaluated. We know that information is being obtained. How, may I repeat, is it to be evaluated? Who will do the evaluation? Will there be public hearings? We want to know what will be the role of the Department of the Environment which, after all, will be taking over the wildlife services from the Department of Northern Development and Indian Affairs; and, as well, the responsibilities

[Mr. Comeau.]

ties regarding water, of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It is important for us to have this information.

In this context may I commend to hon. members the American National Environmental Protection Act of 1969, one of the major pieces of President Nixon's legislation. If we had such legislation in Canada it would enable us to surmount some of the difficulties concerning responsibility which we face. That act makes it clear that certain government departments, in conjunction with the people interested, must carry out such studies as the one I have in my hand, which I referred to earlier, entitled "Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline". The department is required to hold hearings on such draft statements, and interested parties may appear and comment. I did this myself in Washington last month. After that the decision is ultimately made on the basis of what has emerged from the public hearings as well as on the basis of information which the department of government and, of course, the companies concerned, produced.

I feel that the American act could well serve as a model for similar legislation in Canada which would straighten out the responsibilities of various departments in this field. It would not solve all our problems, because problems in this area arise constantly. We must be constantly aware of them and all departments must pay attention to them. Such legislation at least would make clear what procedures must be followed in the ecological evaluation of matters such as the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline route.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question? Is he not aware that in connection with the Territorial Lands Act, concerning the land in the north, we have the right to conduct similar public meetings?

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, the minister is quite right in mentioning that amendment. What I should like to have, Sir—and I am speaking generally at the moment—is an act which could be applied, no matter where a proposed development occurs, be it in Quebec, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories or the Yukon. It should spell out standard procedures to be followed when ecological studies are being undertaken. For example—and it is a small one—if such an act and such procedures had been in existence before the seaway was built it might have warned us of the lamprey problem. That is the type of thing we ought to attend to. Certainly, the situation at present is far from that because, although we have excellent people who are concerned and who are doing good work, there is not an adequate standard procedure in these cases which can be followed. That procedure could well be based on the American National Environmental Protection Act. I urge hon. members to consider this.

It is clear, then, that we have on the one hand two routes to consider. One of these is from Prudhoe Bay to Puget Sound, half of which has been examined. We are not sure that it has been examined properly, and the Americans are uncertain about it. The other half, the sea